

# Department of Human Services

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### Tuesday, August 29, 2006

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## Workers could have saved boy

### Center didn't report bruises before child died, state finds

**BY JACK KRESNAK**

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*August 29, 2006*

Just 12 days before 2-year-old Isaac Lethbridge died of a beating in a Detroit foster home, two social services workers let his foster mother keep the boy despite noting that he was covered with "greenish, blue and black" bruises and had two black eyes.

The foster mother, Charlise Adams-Rogers, told the workers at the Lula Belle Stewart Center that Isaac had been injured during a visit with his biological parents at a McDonald's restaurant on July 21, even though the child's case manager had supervised the visit and reported seeing no such thing.

Nevertheless, according to a state licensing report obtained Monday by the Free Press, the workers sent the child back home with Adams-Rogers on Aug. 4 and failed to report Isaac's suspected abuse to Child Protective Services as required by law.

By the time a Stewart Center licensing worker went to the Adams-Rogers' home on Aug. 9, two days after hearing about Isaac's bruises, she reported that she "did not see any marks other than a light bruise on his forehead," according to the state report prompted by Isaac's violent death nearly two weeks ago.

Wayne County medical examiners say Isaac died of blunt-force injuries to his head and body on Aug. 16. His clavicle also was broken. Detroit police have not identified a suspect in his death.

Adams-Rogers, who declined comment Monday, told the Free Press on Friday that Isaac was put down for a nap at 4 p.m. Aug. 16 and was found unresponsive 45 minutes later. She said there were nine people in the home at the time and she did not know what happened.



Isaac Lethbridge died Aug. 16 of a beating. Police have not named a suspect in the 2-year-old's death.

The report prepared by the Office of Child and Adult Licensing, a division of the Michigan Department of Human Services, lists several failures by the private, nonprofit Stewart Center to report and investigate child maltreatment in the Adams-Rogers foster home.

Janet Burch, interim chief administrator for the Stewart Center since Aug. 1, did not return several phone calls Monday.

The center's child-placing agency license was suspended by the DHS last week, based on the details in the licensing report. A hearing on the DHS request to revoke the center's license is set for Sept. 19 in Detroit.

DHS spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet said Monday she could not comment because of the ongoing investigations.

Last Friday, after a juvenile court hearing for her two adopted daughters, ages 1 1/2 and 12, who were removed from her care, Adams-Rogers denied abusing Isaac and again blamed Isaac's father, Matt Lethbridge, for dropping the boy on his head during his July 21 supervised visit.

Matt Lethbridge said Monday that Isaac fell while in the McDonald's play area but did not hurt his head.

Adams-Rogers' attorney, Marc Shreeman, said last week that his client had passed a privately arranged lie detector test and is telling the truth when she says she doesn't know what happened to Isaac on Aug. 16.

However, the licensing report provides disturbing details about the apparent lax supervision of Adams-Rogers' foster home by the Stewart Center and raises questions about why Isaac and his 4-year-old sister were placed in the home.

Though the home has only three bedrooms -- and just two are available for children -- Adams-Rogers' foster care license with the center since 2002 allowed her to operate a foster family group home with a capacity for six children, according to the licensing report.

The Stewart Center's records indicate that placing medically fragile children or children with emotional disorders in Adams-Rogers' home "would not be appropriate." Yet earlier this year, Adams-Rogers adopted two of her foster children -- biological sisters ages 18 and 12 -- each of whom has behavioral and emotional problems, Wayne County Family Court records show.

The records describe the 12-year-old as having "aggressive behavior, both physically and verbally." The girl takes three medications to control her attention

deficit-hyperactivity disorder, the court records said.

On Sept. 17, 2004, Stewart Center workers also placed a 13-year-old foster child, a girl with cerebral palsy who had a history of being sexually abused, in Adams-Rogers' home.

Adams-Rogers later told the agency that the 13-year-old had been diagnosed with leukemia, scoliosis and arthritis, and had been prescribed several medications and was to be treated at a hospital twice a month.

Yet, the Stewart Center could produce no documentation that any of those diagnoses or treatments ever occurred, according to the licensing report.

On April 4, 2006, the report said, the now-15-year-old girl left Adams-Rogers' home and went to the Stewart Center on West McNichols -- about 1.5 miles away - - to report abuse. She told workers that Rogers had whipped her 12-year-old adopted daughter and said she was afraid to go back, the report said.

A center worker then called Adams-Rogers by phone, the report said, and Adams-Rogers denied abusing her adopted daughter but refused to come to the agency to pick up the 15-year-old.

The report said the center's workers "instructed the 15-year-old foster child to walk back to" Adams-Rogers' home alone.

No one at the agency reported the incident to Child Protective Services as required by law, the report said.

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## Pediatrician analyzes injuries in torture case

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

**shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929**

At first, the 6-year-old Jackson boy told police he fell down the stairs.

That didn't jibe with his injuries: severe lacerations and blistering on his buttocks, bruises all over his face and a festering head wound, according to testimony Monday in District Court.

"He said his mom spanked him with a spatula and hit him with a wooden spoon," Dr. Sandra Kilian, a pediatrician, testified Monday in District Court.

"He had to lay on his abdomen because his buttocks hurt so bad."

Prosecutors charged Jeannine Nyies, 30, and her live-in boyfriend, Ian Anderson, 32, with torture -- the first such charge in Jackson County -- and another charge of first-degree child abuse.

The couple were in court Monday for the first half of a preliminary exam. They are due back in court next week for the exam's conclusion.

Two doctors and a Jackson police officer testified Monday.

The boy told Kilian that Anderson would crack him on the back when he wasn't compliant, step on his feet if he wasn't listening and hold his head under ice-cold water in the bathtub.

Nyies, pregnant and dressed in an orange jail jumpsuit, clutched a sonogram of her unborn child in her hand during the proceedings. Both she and Anderson stared at the ground while seated in the courtroom.

Family members said previously the two had dated about nine months when they were arrested.

Anderson had just entered a treatment facility for heroin addiction between the time of the alleged beating and the time police questioned the pair, prosecutors said.

Jackson police officer Kurt Engler arrived at the couple's house in the 300 block of Carr Street in the early evening of Aug. 9. An anonymous caller told police the boy had injuries on his body consistent with child abuse. Engler talked to Nyies, who said the child had fallen down the stairs.

Engler went inside, found the carpeted and padded stairs and deduced the injuries on the boy didn't come from a freak accident, he testified.

Engler asked Nyies to bring the boy to the hospital. The child was in so much pain that he required a morphine injection so doctors could treat the injuries to his buttocks, where his skin was gone. Doctors also had difficulty treating the child because he was apprehensive about anyone coming near him, said Dr. Gregory Bauman, an emergency-room doctor at Foote Hospital.

At the police station later, Nyies admitted to swatting the boy with a spatula after he kicked a cat and speculated that the injury to his head may have been caused by her pulling the boy's hair during the spanking, Engler testified.

"She told me she hit him until he started crying, then she stopped," Engler said.

The boy was placed in the custody of his biological father. Nyies and Anderson are each being held in the county jail on a \$100,000 bond.

Wendell Jacobs, defense attorney for Anderson, said he is prepared to ask the court for a mental evaluation of his client. Anthony Raduazo, Nyies' attorney, said he is unsure where the case will go.

"My client denies any wrongdoing and that's her position at this point," Raduazo said.

A guilty verdict for the torture charge carries a maximum life sentence.

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# **Police: 'Missing' Toddler Killed By Foster Parents**

## ***Foster Mom Claimed Boy Vanished At Park***

POSTED: 6:28 am EDT August 29, 2006

UPDATED: 7:17 am EDT August 29, 2006

LEWIS TOWNSHIP, Ohio -- The Ohio foster parents who reported a 3-year-old developmentally disabled boy had vanished now are charged with causing his death. Marcus Fiesel's disappearance had triggered a massive search by volunteers. Authorities now said the boy was left in a closet while his foster parents went to a family reunion in Williamsburg, Ky., on Aug. 4.

The authorities said the boy was dead when the couple returned home two days later. The foster father, David Carroll Jr., is accused of burning his body.

Prosecutor Joe Deters said the couple worked out a story before they reported Marcus missing Aug. 15.

Liz Carroll told investigators that she passed out at a Cincinnati park Aug. 15 because of a heart condition and that the child disappeared while she was unconscious. She insisted at a news conference last Tuesday that several people saw the toddler with her at the park, but no one came forward to verify her claim.

She also admitted at the news conference that detectives told her husband he'd failed a lie-detector test.

In the words of the prosecutor: "You would not treat your dog like this."

Deters said a social worker was turned away from the Carrolls' Union Township home on Aug. 10 after they claimed the boy was sick. Another scheduled visit with a social worker was pending, Deters said, possibly prompting the false claim that Fiesel had disappeared at the park.

"They were running out of time," Deters said.

Just hours after the Hamilton County, Ohio, prosecutor announced the arrest of the Carrolls, officials said the body of the couple's 3-year-old foster son was found.

Georgetown, Ohio, police said that the remains of Marcus Fiesel were discovered on an 88-acre estate.

Deters said foster father David Carroll had taken the child's body to Brown County, Ohio, and incinerated it.

Property owner Mike Cales said detectives from Hamilton, Clermont and Brown counties asked his permission to collect evidence from the area around a two-story stone chimney. He said the chimney is all that's left of a home that hasn't been occupied since the 1960s.

"The fields have grown up all around it," Cales said.

David and Liz Carroll have each been charged with one count of involuntary manslaughter and two counts of child endangerment. David Carroll faces an additional

charge of gross abuse of a corpse, and Deters said more charges are possible.

"These charges are to keep them in custody," he said.

A woman who lived with the Carrolls could also be prosecuted.

"We believe everyone was aware. Everyone covered up," Deters said.

**Private Foster-Placement Agency Remains Silent On Boy's Death**

Lifeway for Youth worked with Butler County Children's Services to place the developmentally disabled boy with the Carrolls.

"They should never had a child like this in their custody," Deters said.

The private agency won't comment on the case, but a few former employees said that Fiesel likely was placed with the Carrolls for the money.

Lifeway gets paid for the number of children it places, and the former employees said the cash is all that the organization cares about, placing children as quickly as possible with whoever will take them, according to WLWT-TV in Cincinnati.

A former caseworker said she was given 76 clients in her first month on her job.

"Over the past three to four weeks, there have been some concerns raised about some of the Lifeway homes, and as a result those children have been moved into respite care," said Jann Heffner of Butler County Children's Services.



August 29, 2006

## Court Ruling Clears Mother in Son's Suicide

By AVI SALZMAN

STAMFORD, Conn., Aug. 28 — The Connecticut Supreme Court on Monday overturned the conviction of a woman who prosecutors said had kept such a messy home that it endangered the safety and mental health of her 12-year-old son, who killed himself in 2002. The case had sparked a national debate over parental responsibility for a child's suicide.

The case of Judith Scruggs, a single mother from Meriden, and her son, Daniel, was the first in which a [Connecticut](#) parent was charged criminally in a child's suicide, experts said. It also brought national attention to the issue of child bullying after it was revealed that Daniel had been abused repeatedly by his classmates.

The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that prosecutors could not point to “objective standards for determining the point at which housekeeping becomes so poor that an ordinary person should know that it poses an unacceptable risk to the mental health of a child.”

Justice William J. Sullivan wrote the majority opinion, and a separate concurring opinion was signed by two justices.

The ruling reversed Ms. Scruggs's conviction on one felony count of putting her child at risk by creating an unhealthy and unsafe home. She was sentenced to probation and 100 hours of community service in 2004.

Ms. Scruggs did not return messages left with her lawyer and a friend on Monday, but the friend, Lisa Toomey, said she spoke to Ms. Scruggs after the decision was released and described her as “ecstatic.”

During the trial, prosecutors were careful to separate the charges against Ms. Scruggs from Daniel's death, noting that they were not seeking to prove that Ms. Scruggs's conduct led to her son's suicide. Nonetheless, the trial presented a narrative of Daniel's misery, which ended on Jan. 2, 2002, when he hung himself in his bedroom closet.

Witnesses testified that Daniel was punched, kicked and spat on in school and that he regularly skipped classes and even defecated in his clothes so he could be sent home.

The Scruggs home was opened up for jurors through photographs and witnesses' accounts; investigators testified that clothes, household items and debris were piled throughout the house, and that there was no clear surface in the kitchen to eat or prepare food.

One police officer testified that the house smelled like a "dirty clothes hamper" and had "an odor of garbage." In the closet where Daniel was found, the police found a spear and three long knives.

M. H. Reese Norris, Ms. Scruggs's lawyer, argued in the trial that Daniel was far more traumatized by his experiences in school than by the mess at home.

A state report later found that Daniel had been let down by numerous agencies, including the state Department of Children and Families, which had closed an investigation into Daniel's situation just days before he died.

Ms. Scruggs is suing the Meriden school system and the city in connection with her son's death. That case is pending, lawyers said.

At her sentencing, Mr. Norris described Ms. Scruggs, who is in her mid-50's, as a struggling single parent who was working 60 hours a week at two jobs when Daniel died. The judge faulted her for failing to show remorse and for blaming her problems on others.

Douglas Nash, who represented Ms. Scruggs in her appeal, said the charges had placed blame where it did not belong.

"All you had here was a cluttered house," he said.

Ms. Toomey, a business owner from Wallingford who started an anti-bullying advocacy group after reading about Daniel's suicide, said the Supreme Court's ruling showed prosecutors had "taken the attention off the root of the problem."

She said, "She absolutely should not have been charged, because it wasn't the cause of his suicide."

Ms. Toomey's group worked to get legislation passed in the state legislature holding schools accountable for bullying and making it easier for students to report abuse. She said Daniel's case made parents more willing to speak out about bullying.

Lawyers and legal experts said the court's opinion would probably not shift precedent in cases in which a parent is accused of neglecting a child's needs. Still, prosecutors will be hard pressed to charge another parent whose home is unsuitable for children, said Leon F. Dalbec, who prosecuted the case.

"It's going to be difficult because of this decision," he said. "It's got to be really, really bad conditions. It's got to be so obvious that there would be no other opinion on the matter."

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Detroit News

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

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## **Man faces HIV status, child sex charges**

Steven Foster, 37, a Detroit truck driver, is scheduled for arraignment today in 22nd District Court on two counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of withholding information on his HIV status in connection with an alleged sexual encounter with a 14-year-old boy. John Roach, a spokesman for Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans, said deputies and prosecutors are preparing a warrant to take blood from Foster to confirm his claim that he is HIV-positive.



## Couple to undergo mental evaluations

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

**By Steven Hepker**

**shepker@citpat.com -- 768-4923**

A couple charged with sexually assaulting the woman's handicapped daughter will undergo mental evaluations before the case advances.

Attorneys for April Kurtz, 30, and Justin Howard, 18, petitioned the court to determine if their clients are competent to assist in their defense. District Judge Joseph Filip is expected to sign orders sending the two to the Center for Forensic Psychiatry.

"Both have a history of mental illness," Alfred Brandt, attorney for Kurtz, said.

Wendell Jacobs Jr. is Howard's attorney.

Kurtz and Howard are charged with first-degree criminal sexual conduct, and child sexually abusive material.

State police allege Kurtz' 11-year-old daughter told her grandmother that Kurtz held her down while Howard raped her.

The girl has cerebral palsy and lives with her grandmother, but Kurtz spent some time with her.

Police said the couple also took off the girl's clothes, positioned her in sexually explicit positions and took pictures with cell-phone cameras.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### 3 arrested in child prostitution case

Nationwide operation reportedly forced children as young as 12 into the sex trade

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

**By News Staff and The Associated Press**

A man and two women from Toledo pleaded guilty Monday to federal charges stemming from a nationwide prostitution operation that was cracked after police discovered two underaged girls had been forced into prostitution at a Washtenaw County truck stop.

Authorities say the members of the ring forced children as young as 12 to have sex at truck stops, hotels and brothels.

Deric Willoughby, 41, Brandy Shope, 19, and Jennifer Huskey, 25, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Detroit to conspiracy and interstate transportation of minors for prostitution, U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said.

Willoughby and Shope each face up to seven years and three months in prison, Huskey faces up to five years and 11 months' imprisonment, and all three could be fined up to \$250,000 at sentencing hearings scheduled for Dec. 6.

A grand jury in Detroit charged the defendants in December 2005 with forcing two girls, 14 and 15, into prostitution in May of that year. The girls had been held as virtual prisoners in Toledo, where they were told to address Willoughby as "Daddy" and were taken to hotel rooms for prostitution. Their payments were eventually turned over to Willoughby, the indictment said.

Willoughby admitted in court Monday that he gave the girls false identities, including false birthdates, which they were told to use if detained by authorities.

Another defendant, Richard Lamar Gordon, was identified in the indictment as a truck driver who took the girls from a parking lot at a Sears store in the Toledo area to a truck stop on Baker Road in Scio Township and had sex with the 14-year-old. Gordon has not been arrested.

Willoughby, Shope and Huskey were among 31 people linked to four child prostitution rings in Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said in December.

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## Molester to argue for leaner sentence

Judge gives case new look after state alters guidelines

PUBLISHED: August 29, 2006

By Jameson Cook  
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A convicted child molester is hoping a judge today will reduce his prison term.

Macomb County Circuit Judge Mary Chrzanowski today will resentence Brian Klecha, 43, of Clinton Township, who is serving an 11- to 25-year prison term for first-degree criminal sexual conduct. The case was a result of a plea deal with the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office.

Klecha's sentencing guidelines have been altered because of a change in one of the state's scoring factors, which determine the length of incarceration. After reviewing reports, the judge determined that Klecha should not have been penalized for more than one penetration.

Klecha pleaded guilty to the life offense for having sexual contact and penetration with an 11-year-old whom he was baby-sitting, in exchange for dismissal of six additional CSC counts involving the same girl. Other children who were in his care told police he did not molest them.

The judge's initial sentence of Klecha in July 2005 to 132 to 300 months was near the low end of sentencing guidelines, which at that time called for 126 to 210 months. The range has been reduced to 108 to 180 months so Chrzanowski could hand down the identical sentence and remain within guidelines.

Klecha's defense attorney, Patricia Maceroni, also had argued that two other factors used in the sentencing should have reduced the minimum range down to 51 to 85 months, but those changes were turned down by the judge.

Prosecutors actually won an increase in one of the factors, showing a continuing pattern of criminal behavior by performing molestations over a time period, but it was not enough to change the guidelines.

Maceroni said defendants commonly protest scoring factors that determine ranges in sentencing guidelines because those are often open to interpretation and are based on presentence reports prepared by the probation department.

The sentencing guidelines and the scoring system for them were developed by state lawmakers to provide somewhat objective ways of sentencing.

"You're dealing with interpreting a legislative scheme," Maceroni said.

"It's not an exact science."

Another factor is Klecha's behavior since being incarcerated. Housed at the Macomb Correctional Facility in Lenox Township, Klecha has been behaving well in prison and has been receiving mental health counseling, Maceroni said.

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August 29, 2006

## Few beds for nursing home patients

Medicaid recipients must look outside Oakland

**Maureen Feighan / The Detroit News**

**SOUTHFIELD** -- Oakland, one of the nation's wealthiest large counties, is running out of room to care for its poorest and frailest residents, advocates say.

Hit by the closure of a large Bloomfield Hills nursing home in late July that displaced more than 150 low-income Medicaid recipients, long-term care advocates say there's now a shortage in Oakland County nursing homes of Medicaid beds -- those reserved for uninsured patients too poor to pay.

At times this month, the county's long-term care ombudsman knew of only one open bed out of the county's 3,129 certified for Medicaid patients -- in Holly.

Social workers say patients and families can sometimes wait days or even weeks for placement, depending on the level of care they need or how important it is to be close to family. The POH Medical Center in Pontiac has two patients with acute needs who have been waiting for beds since July -- and it's just one of more than two dozen such facilities in Oakland County.

"The result is we have to end up going outside the county" to look for beds, said social worker Gwendolyn Williams-Conner.

For families and loved ones, the bed crunch means having longer waits to find the right home and considering options farther away. For patients, it means fewer choices, living in facilities they may not like and having a reduced quality of life.

"It's not the families that are most affected -- it's the patients," said Toni Wilson, a long-term care ombudsman with Citizens for Better Care, a nonprofit advocacy group for residents of long-term care facilities.

Judge Gray, 78, and his wife, Billie, former Troy residents, are playing the waiting game. They were transferred to a Detroit nursing home earlier this month after MediLodge of Bloomfield Hills closed and the two couldn't find beds together in Oakland County.

Gray, a racetrack fan and jazz lover, likes his new home but would prefer to be in Macomb County because bus service is scheduled to end near the facility he's at now, and he needs transportation. He often visits the Hazel Park racetrack. He's ruled out Oakland because of the shortage.

"I'd like to get where I can stop moving and be in one place," said Gray, confined to a wheelchair after a 1994 aneurism operation left him paralyzed from the waist down. "But if I can't get out to go anywhere, I'm going to feel like a prisoner."

Oakland County, with 39 nursing homes and 4,750 nursing beds, has always had a limited number of Medicaid beds, advocates say. Only 72 percent of the county's beds are "certified" -- meaning they meet certain requirements -- for Medicaid recipients. The state average is 90 percent.

Sara Slocum, the state long-term ombudsman with the Office of Services to the Aging, said operators could have more beds cleared for Medicaid residents, but many don't because Medicaid reimburses nursing homes at a lower rate than Medicare.

"I understand they're (nursing home operators) looking at the bottom line, and I understand that," Slocum said. "I would like for that (how many beds nursing homes have certified for Medicaid or Medicare) not to be driven by the payment source. But that's not the world we have."

It all comes down to each facility's business model, said David Herbel, president and CEO of the Michigan Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, which represents 220 nonprofit health care organizations, including nursing homes. "Some folks choose to participate in large part in Medicaid, and others do not," Herbel said.

"Not-for-profits are typically dually certified (for Medicaid and Medicare), and it's their mission to serve."

MediLodge of Bloomfield Hills, a for-profit home with 342 Medicaid-certified beds, was one of the county's largest providers. A lawyer for the facility said it was closed after an expected sale fell through, and it had no

problem relocating patients to other facilities.

Since its closure, two former residents have died and one broke a leg and sprained a shoulder within two days because of falls. Wilson said forced moves are very traumatic for frail residents, often leading to a phenomenon called "transfer trauma." Dolores Kerner, 59, who suffers from diabetes and multiple sclerosis, is struggling to adjust. She wanted to be moved to another MediLodge facility but wasn't given a choice, she said. She's now at the Lakeland Center in Southfield.

"I just can't get used to it," said Kerner, who has fallen twice since her move and is now in a splint and sling, in addition to a wheelchair. "I'm depressed."

Under federal law, residents are supposed to be given a choice of where they would like to go when a nursing home closes. But with limited beds, there are few choices, if any, Wilson said. MediLodge lawyers contend residents were given a choice.

Some worry families and patients will have even fewer choices if county officials move forward with bids to either privatize or close their nursing home, Golden Oaks Medical Care Facility.

For now, county officials have decided to subsidize the cash-strapped 120-bed facility that primarily caters to Medicaid recipients for at least the next two years. It's facing a \$2.4 million deficit, partly because it was barred from accepting new patients for one month last year after the state found several deficiencies in October 2005.

And even with the county's support, its future remains uncertain. Tom Gordon, the county's director of health and human services, said his staff will continue to study the bids they have received. And if they do decide to close Golden Oaks, they would likely make it a required condition of any agreement with any other facility to maintain its beds, Gordon said.

"We don't want the beds to go away, but we don't necessarily want to run the facility," said Gordon.

Still, Jean Scott-Fox, whose daughter, Annette Scott, has been at Golden Oaks for four years, is relieved that for now she doesn't have to worry about finding her daughter a new home.

Scott-Fox remembers how difficult it was the first time she had to find a nursing facility for her daughter, who suffered permanent brain damage after she was shot during a carjacking 13 years ago and is now a paraplegic. Most nursing homes wouldn't take her, and Scott-Fox eventually had to go to court.

"The county owes us," she said. "All of us are vulnerable to something like this."

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Published August 29, 2006

[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

More letters to the editor

## **Elders need relief**

The LSJ reported on the death of a mentally ill inmate, (Aug. 21 article, "Jackson inmate's death draws attention"), who died after being held in a cell that felt close to 106 degrees. But mentally ill inmates aren't the only vulnerable populations who suffer and die when temperatures soar.

A telephone survey of 348 Michigan nursing homes revealed that about half do not have air conditioning in all resident rooms. The attorney general is now prosecuting a Detroit nursing home for one death and abuse of other residents whose body temperatures reached 107 degrees in a 2001 heat wave.

We know every summer brings heat waves, that many nursing home residents suffer from conditions that make them especially susceptible to heat and we know simple ways to prevent death and suffering from extreme temperatures. When will the state and the nursing home industry address this tragic neglect of residents?

Alison Hirschel  
Michigan Campaign for Quality Care  
East Lansing



## Saginaw 6-year-old cautiously leading a fragile life

Monday, August 28, 2006

**THERESA ROACH**

### THE SAGINAW NEWS

Arianna T. Moore hurries from the computer room to her Tinkerbell-themed bedroom.

As she does, her grandmother, Dortha A. Hearn of Saginaw, reminds her to "slow down" and "be careful." One mistake, and it's a trip to the hospital for the playful 6-year-old.

Arianna has osteogenesis imperfecta, a rare disease that decreases the amount of collagen in the bones, making them easier to break.

She has suffered more than 30 broken bones and fractures and has had three surgeries to her right arm and two to her right leg to implant metal rods, medical records show.

Arianna attended the Saginaw Intermediate School District's Millet Learning Center last year, but her teachers said she was too advanced for the classes. The school provides basic education for children with severe disabilities.

Osteogenesis imperfecta does not effect mental development, said Mary Beth Huber, information and resource director of the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation.

This year, Arianna will attend the Saginaw School District's Zilwaukee School if Hearn can get transportation for her before the bell sounds Tuesday, Sept. 5. Although Arianna can walk on her own, she must have a motorized wheelchair while in school for safety reasons.

"I like to write and color, especially smiley faces and hearts," Arianna said before hopping out of a chair to retrieve a puzzle book. "And I like my puzzles."

### Family history

Arianna's grandmother became the girl's legal guardian in 2005.

The 54-year-old was the only person in her family who had dealt with osteogenesis imperfecta -- brittle bone disease -- before.

Arianna's father and Hearn's son, Frankie Moore Jr., died in 2004 at 34. He also had osteogenesis imperfecta and died from health problems related to obesity, his mother said. The girl's mother is Melissa Cleveland of Newcomerstown, Ohio.

"(Arianna) already lost her father, and her mom gave her up. I didn't want her to have to go through the foster system, too," Hearn said.

In May 1972, when Frankie Moore was 6 weeks old, Hearn took him to the hospital because he wouldn't stop crying.

"When he was born, he would cry all the time, and I didn't know why. I wanted to know why my baby cried so much," Hearn said.

Doctors discovered fractured ribs and healing fractures. They believed he was a victim of child abuse, and days later authorities placed him in foster care.

Three months later, doctors diagnosed Frankie Moore with osteogenesis imperfecta, and his mother regained custody.

Today doctors understand more about the disease, but many may never see a case of osteogenesis imperfecta, experts say. The disease appears once in every 15,000 births in the United States, research from the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation shows.

"With the rate that it occurs, it's very likely that (Arianna) is the only person in the community with OI," Huber said. "That's why it's so hard to treat. Many doctors never see it in their entire careers."

### **Wheels needed**

In February, Hearn was injured in a rollover wreck at South Washington and Rust. The crash totaled the wheelchair-accessible van she used to transport Arianna's 33-pound motorized wheelchair.

Financial hardship has posed a barrier to replacing the vehicle. Hearn said she needs \$10,000 to \$12,000 to buy a used one.

Doctors placed Hearn on leave from work and have yet to approve her return as an adult care provider. She receives \$341 each month from her insurance and \$603 each month for Arianna, a supplemental income for disabled people and children.

Hearn's family members could not help financially, so they suggested she open a donation account for Arianna.

Those wishing to help may ask to give to the Arianna Moore Account at any Citizens Bank branch in Saginaw County.

"When I got into the accident, someone told me, 'You're a lucky woman.' I said, 'No, I'm blessed. That was just God keeping me safe so I can continue to take care of my granddaughter,'" Hearn said.

Arianna, who was Cinderella for Halloween, likes to play like any other kindergartner -- though she must take care to avoid falls.

"She's happy," her grandmother said. "I try to get her whatever I can. She likes to draw, color, read and go to school."

Osteogenesis imperfecta varies in severity. Some people, including Arianna, can walk on their own, while others cannot. Most people with the disease live a normal life span, Huber said.

"It doesn't affect their ability to think and learn," Huber said. "With the right accommodations, they grow up have jobs, families and are active in the community. It's just a matter of finding the accommodations they need."

For more information on osteogenesis imperfecta, you can visit the foundation's Web site, [www.oif.org](http://www.oif.org), or call (800) 981-2663. v

Theresa Roach is a staff writer for she Saginaw News. You may reach her at 776-9716.

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August 29, 2006

**Anthony B. Bradley: Faith and Policy**

## Welfare reform succeeded because it trusted the poor



Last week marked the 10th anniversary of welfare reform, which made radical changes to receiving unearned government cash. The results have been massive reductions in child poverty, increases in employment, and a subsequent increase in the freedom of the poor from government control.

In the mid-1990s, many attempted to incite fear to kill the reforms. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D--N.Y., proclaimed the 1996 law to be "the most brutal act of social policy since Reconstruction." Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, declared the new reform law an "outrage that will hurt and impoverish millions of American children." As expected, these projections were dead wrong.

Robert Rector, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, using government data, summarized welfare reform's success before Congress.

The facts tell a powerful story: When the poor are invited to live as people with dignity, within structures of liberty, they will usually do so. Since the 1996 reforms child poverty has plummeted. Some 1.6 million fewer children live in poverty today than in 1995.

Poor black children have enjoyed the greatest decreases in poverty. After the early 1970s, reductions in black child poverty had stagnated. Since 1995, however, the poverty rate among black children has fallen at an unprecedented rate -- from 41.5 percent to 32.9 percent in 2004.

Although recent economic corrections have slightly increased black child poverty, the rate remains about one-fifth lower than in the period prior to reform.

Unprecedented declines in poverty also occurred among children of single mothers. After 1996, the poverty rate for children of single mothers fell dramatically from 50.3 percent in 1995 to 41.9 percent in 2004.

Employment of single mothers who are high school dropouts rose by two-thirds, and employment of young single mothers (18-24) nearly doubled. As mothers found employment, child poverty decreased.

Additionally, welfare caseloads have been cut in half, dropping from 4.3 million families in 1996 to 1.89 million today. The explosive growth of out-of-wedlock births has nearly halted. As the policies of the "War on Poverty" discouraged fatherhood, the out-of-wedlock birthrate went from 7.7 percent in 1965 to 32.2 percent in 1995. However since 1996 (and for several reasons besides welfare reform), the long-term rapid growth in the out-of-wedlock birthrate faltered.

When our society provides incentives encouraging work, marriage, family and accountability --which are central to human dignity -- we see people thought to be helpless rise to the occasion.

However, there is still more work to be done. Poor parents should have the freedom to put their kids in good schools; states should not be allowed to economically enable those who refuse to work, which creates poverty cycles; fatherhood and marriage should be encouraged structurally; and as a nation we must commit ourselves to helping the poor of all races build wealth.

The principles of entrepreneurship, homeownership, family, saving and investing, and commitment to community will not only lift families out of poverty but empower them to enjoy lives of dignity.

*Anthony B. Bradley is a research fellow at the Acton Institute in Grand Rapids E-mail letters to [letters@detnews.com](mailto:letters@detnews.com).*

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# From Welfare to Work

The New York Times

Published: August 29, 2006

To the Editor:

“Mission Unaccomplished” (editorial, Aug. 24) describes the welfare reform that began 10 years ago. The grade is incomplete as long as millions of single parents live in poverty, working sporadically or part time at a series of low-wage jobs.

A \$5 million welfare-to-work demonstration in the Clinton administration (which I directed at Johns Hopkins) showed one way to move toward completing the task. The strategy was to support the relationship between the worker and her supervisor.

As workers demonstrated responsibility and acquired skills, their bosses rewarded them with better work schedules, promotions and higher pay. Former hard-to-serve welfare recipients stayed on the job for a year and more. Their earnings increased by up to 20 percent within a year and 28 percent over two years.

Those who stayed on the job for 12 months averaged earnings of \$14,676 a year; retention of 24 months produced average yearly earnings of \$17,264.

Adding the earned income tax credit and food stamps brought families of three well beyond the federal poverty line — a goal that will accomplish the mission of reforming welfare.

Arnold Packer

Baltimore, Aug. 24, 2006

*The writer was assistant secretary of labor in the Carter administration.*

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

Blogs hit school strike, welfare, Katrina

The following are excerpts from The Detroit News' politics blog.

## **Welfare reform's success**

Name: Henry Payne

The Detroit News

You know welfare reform was a success by the silence. The child poverty rate is down to 17.8 percent from 20.8 percent in 1995 despite the recession of 2001. The number of people on welfare has plunged 60 percent. Employment of single mothers is up.

But good news is not news.



## Mission issue on ballot

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

GREENVILLE -- Voters will decide Nov. 7 whether an ordinance allowing rescue missions will stay on the books. Montcalm County Clerk Kristen Millard has approved language for a referendum, forced by opponents to a mission in the former Faith Baptist Church. City Clerk Bradley Hool said 598 petition signatures were deemed valid, 101 more than required. If the ordinance is overturned, it merely means the city cannot regulate shelters, City Manager George Bosanic said. Hope Ministries may still operate a shelter through a permit requested from planning commissioners, City Attorney Richard Butler said. The commission is to rule on the permit Sept. 14.

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**ourMidland.com**  
from the Midland Daily News

08/27/2006

## Choosing child care

Rebecca Anlas , Midland Daily News

As the summer nears the end, parents of young children will be thinking about their childcare needs for the fall for their infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Choosing a quality child care program can be challenging. There are many resources available to help parents know what to look for when making this important choice – from the Internet, to the library to local child care assistance agencies. One such agency locally is Child Care Concepts 4C of Midland, which can provide parents with a list and information on local licensed day care homes and centers.

The choice between a home or a center is a personal preference and there are advantages to each. Remember, in this state, the law requires that anyone who watches unrelated children in their home (for a fee or for free) have a license. Contact the child care licensing division at the state Department of Human Services to find out more about this.

For those who prefer a licensed home daycare, your choice will offer your child a smaller group of children in a home-like atmosphere. Many parents of infants/toddlers prefer this option. What should you look for in a quality home business?

References to start. It is common for the provider to invite you for your first visit when there are no children there so that she may spend all of her time and attention on you and your specific needs as well as providing you with her policies or other paperwork. Once a child is enrolled, you should be able to visit at anytime without calling. An open door policy for parents is a must. Check that the home is childproofed. Interview the provider as if she were your employee, as technically she will be. The provider will hopefully invite you (and your child) to visit when the program is in action. At this time, see if the environment is set up in a child-centered fashion, with plenty of activities and age-appropriate materials available. Does the provider spend a great deal of time interacting with the children? (She should). Does the provider speak in gentle tones with the children, does she redirect children who are having difficulty instead of sending them immediately to "time out?" Does the provider use humor and seem genuinely interested in what the children are doing? Is there outside play each morning and each afternoon? Is the outdoor space safe and well equipped? What are the provider's "rest time" policies? Do the children have experiences in art, sensory, music and pretend play daily? All of these components help make up a quality program. The provider's priority should be to work with you, sharing ideas, daily communication and genuine concern about your child's well-being.

There are many, many family and group homes in Midland, although openings aren't always easy to find.

For parents who prefer a center setting, their child will be getting a larger group experience and often a preschool education along with it (though most homes now also offer kindergarten readiness activities). Learning through play is how children learn best as infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Ask the director what the philosophy includes. Visit and observe how staff interact with the children. Are they kind and gentle in their tone? Do they praise the children for positive behaviors? What is the turnover rate? Ask the employees how long they have been there. Is the facility clean and child centered with many materials at child level? What about a flow-chart? Does it offer activities in art, music, sensory and outdoor play? Most of the qualities you would look for in a home care setting also apply to a center. What is the provider's/teacher's background in child development or training? Does she regularly attend staff development activities?

As a parent, this can be a stressful, challenging effort. But it is the most important decision you will make for yourself and your child. You deserve to feel 100 percent comfortable and positive about your choice. If you have any concerns, address them with the provider as soon as possible. Don't let your worries build up. For more information on what to look for in a childcare setting, contact the state Department of Human Services office in Midland or the Child Care Concepts 4C office at 631-3590.

Rebecca Anlas, B.A., ECE, is at the Appletree Preschool & Child Care in Midland.

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August 29, 2006

**A child is waiting**

## Boy needs a little extra help, attention -- and a family

**Rosemary Dorr / Special to The Detroit News**

With a friendly smile, Gary says there isn't anything he doesn't like. "I like cars and fruit and playing -- especially basketball. I like to ride my bike, too."

Last month, he eagerly adds, "I learned how to ride without training wheels."

Learning is a struggle for Gary, 10, who attends special education classes for cognitively impaired children. "I like school," he says, "because I play and do work."

"Gary has adapted very well here," says his foster mother of 10 months. "He's a very inquisitive child. He takes a lot of re-directing and supervision, but he knows he's one of the family and shows a great deal of love and affection. He's still fearful of being left, though."

She notes, "Gary loves to clean. He sweeps our driveway every day."

Gary, leaning over to give her a quick kiss, proudly says, "There are a lot of books downstairs, and I straighten them out every day. I straightened out the garage. My big (foster) brothers helped me out."

"Gary's friendly, happy and easygoing," says his adoption worker. "And very neat. There are some mental health issues, some developmental delays, and he will always need someone. Given the right placement and guidance, though, he (as an adult) could be employed."

Might you consider adoption? Please talk with Regina Kirtz at Spaulding for Children, (248) 443-0300.

**Last column's child:** Jawon, 8, hyperactive and anxious, is showing progress. For information, call Jenelle Harden at Orchards Children's Services, (248) 593-1546.

### Adoption fair

Kinship will hold its 17th annual Adoption Festival from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 9 at the Casino on Belle Isle, Detroit. For information on this free event, call (800) 589-6273.

*A Child is Waiting appears Tuesdays in Features.*

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# Number of Food Stamp Users Drops for 2nd Summer in Row

By [SEWELL CHAN](#)  
Published: August 29, 2006

For the second year in a row, the number of New York City residents receiving food stamps has fallen during the summer after rising during the rest of the year, a pattern that has raised questions among advocates for the needy about whether eligible people find it too cumbersome to apply for assistance.

Fluctuations in food stamp enrollment are closely monitored because of the sheer number of people served. Last month, 1,087,115 city residents used food stamps, a slight decline from 1,095,202 in June and 1,098,225 in May, according to statistics recently released by the city's Human Resources Administration.

When a similar decline occurred between May and August of last year, the agency described it as a statistical anomaly and predicted that it was a one-time event. The fact that it has happened again struck some experts as odd.

"The question is why growth has stagnated given that so many people remain eligible who do not receive benefits," said Stacy Dean, director of

food stamp policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal research group in Washington that monitors the program.

“Historically, food stamp caseloads often have gone down during the summer and there was a seasonal pattern to enrollment, because people would have seasonal employment, for example,” she said. “That pattern did seem to flatten out over the last couple of years, but it may be coming back.”

However, Barbara Brancaccio, a spokeswoman for the Human Resources Administration, maintained that the economic conditions for low-income residents had improved on the whole over the past year.

“The overall economy is doing better, and the total number of jobs in New York City has increased since July 2005,” she said. “Average wages have increased as well. As a result, we are closing out more food stamp cases and declining some applications because the income is in excess of the eligibility threshold.”

Ms. Brancaccio said it was too early to predict whether the decline in food stamp enrollment signified a trend that would last into the fall or beyond.

Carlos M. Rodriguez, a vice president at the Food Bank for New York City, which distributes food to 1,200 food pantries, soup kitchens and other charities, said he was confounded by the drop in enrollment. “I am troubled by the decline,” he said. “I don’t see the need going down in the population we serve.”

Indeed, city records show that in five of the first six months of this year, the number of New Yorkers using food pantries and soup kitchens was higher than in the same period a year ago. The city’s unemployment rate also rose to 5.7 percent last month, from 5.1 percent in June.

About one-third of people using food stamps also receive cash assistance

under federal and state welfare programs, but the trends for the two types of benefits have not moved in tandem.

The city's welfare caseload dropped to 388,692 last month — the lowest level since September 1964 and a two-thirds decline since the peak of nearly 1.2 million in March 1995. The caseload dropped steeply under the mayoralty of [Rudolph W. Giuliani](#) and then rose from 2002 to 2004, during Mayor [Michael R. Bloomberg](#)'s first term, before falling once again.

In contrast, the number of people using food stamps also peaked in March 1995, at 1,458,300, and then fell to a low of 798,396 in January 2002, the same month Mr. Bloomberg took office. Since then, with the exception of a few months, the number has risen rather consistently. The current number, just shy of 1.1 million, is about the same as it was in 1998.

The [Census Bureau](#) is scheduled to release its annual income and poverty data today.

A mayoral commission Mr. Bloomberg established in January to draw up plans for combating poverty in his second term appears poised to recommend that the city focus on helping three groups — young children, young adults and the working poor — rather than try to help all poor people at once. Food stamps are considered an important source of income for all three groups.

The Bloomberg administration has occasionally clashed with advocates and other elected officials over the rules that determine access to food stamps. The mayor has agreed to accept applications by mail or fax, to allow nonprofit groups to accept applications and process them online, and to open food stamp offices separate from welfare offices, but he has been wary of loosening eligibility rules.

In March, Verna Eggleston, the commissioner of the Human Resources Administration, requested a waiver that would have made it easier for able-

bodied adults who do not have children and are 18 to 49 years old to receive food stamps — even if they are not working — for longer than the normal federal limit of three months in any three-year period.

Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs, the mayor's top aide on social services matters, approved Ms. Eggleston's decision, but the mayor overruled them both and ordered the request withdrawn after it became public in April. "You have to have a penalty if there's a requirement to work, and this penalty is one that's appropriate," he said at the time.

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